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➤BOOK ❖ NOTICES.❖➤

WILSON'S "ELEMENTS OF SYRIAC GRAMMAR" AND AN "INTRODUCTORY SYRIAC METHOD AND MANUAL."*

These two books are not only supplementary, but indispensable the one to the other, and are intended to supply for the Ancient Syriac language what has been done by Professor Harper's text-books for the Hebrew. The inductive method, so far as exhibited in the grammar, consists merely in printing the examples before the rules, or deduced principles, as perhaps we should call them; and that is about the only substantial difference in method between this grammar and others. The rules or principles are generally stated in a concise and clear manner; and there is enough of the elementary in a clear form in the two books to give a pupil—with a teacher—a good start in Syriac. The grammar alone, however, could not be used to profit without a teacher; while its referring so constantly to the Manual for its examples detracts very much from its utility as a general grammar for the reader of texts. At the same time it goes very much beyond the needs of the student of the Manual, and is evidently intended to supply the place of a larger grammar in English; which, however, it can scarcely do in its present shape, to say nothing of the distance—in comprehensiveness, depth and finish—between this work and the magnificent grammar in small compass of Nöldeke, and the less accurate and masterly but more comprehensive one of Duval. A smaller grammar than this would have secured its object better; and the inductive method would have been more nearly attained in the practical way of furnishing more extensive and complete tables or paradigms, and leaving to induction from extensive reading—for the student will never learn them in any other way—the matters of etymology that are presented as another's deduction, along with a few examples to illustrate the latter placed before that deduction in order of printing. Not that the latter is to be found fault with by itself; but one of the crying needs of the book is that tables of the paradigms of verbs are so scanty, while the principles for making them are, in general, admirably set forth, and the verb otherwise so well treated as to exhibit one of the best parts of the book. The compilation of this grammar seems to be made from a faithful study of the master European grammarians, along with a good, but none too extensive, reading of Syriac authors. The statements are often too strongly tinged with a feeling of the literal interpretation, mechanical and verbal, where the real meaning and force of the Syriac in English is omitted; but this is a feature not to be avoided in elementary books—although it sometimes inculcates ideas which the student will have to unlearn by and by.

*THE "ELEMENTS OF SYRIAC GRAMMAR BY AN INDUCTIVE METHOD," AND AN "INTRODUCTORY SYRIAC METHOD AND MANUAL," by Robert Dick Wilson, Ph. D. Professor of Old Testament Languages and History in the Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pa. 8vo, Grammar, pp. viii., 209; Manual, pp. viii. 160. New York: *Charles Scribner's Sons*, price of each, \$2.50 net.

"In the syntax," the author says, though he might have added, in the other portions of the grammar also, "when the examples could not be verified, the grammar from which they have been taken has been noted." All true and excellent; but nevertheless his unverified examples have sometimes brought him into a very treacherous place. One of these will suffice. On p. 130 (§ 103, Rem. 3) we find the rather startling statement that ܡܢܐ (*mono*, the neuter interrogative pronoun) is in a few instances used as an adjective, and sometimes for persons. Turning back to the examples supposed to sustain this principle, we find "ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ" *what Satan hath filled thy heart?* (Barh. I. p. 184, l. 24 [Duv.])," along with another example we may speak of farther on. Sure enough, the example is found in Duval's grammar, at page 301, with the statement that the word can be put, *like* an adjective, *in apposition* with a substantive. (Duval's examples, all but this one given, are from a grammar of *Modern Syriac*). Turning to the reference in Barhebraeus, we find no such thing. Barhebraeus is treating of the contraction of two particles into one, and says, in substance, at this place, that ܡܢܐ and ܡܢ are regularly so contracted or joined (into ܡܢܐ, *monau*) in expressions of threatening; and then he cites (in Syriac, of course, from Acts v. 3) "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart?" using the words of the Peshitto, omitting only as unnecessary for his purpose the ܡܢܐ; taking ܡܢܐ, a common MS. reading in his region, in place of the ܡܢܐ, of the Nestorians or the ܡܢܐ of the English and other editions; and—not ܡܢܐ at all, but ܡܢܐ, as it stands in the Peshitto, making all sure by his pointing. Then he adds, in substance, For it is clear that if Peter had said ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ, with the words separated or uncontracted, it would not have been an expression of threatening. The construction, then, is only the regular one, ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ, "What (i. e. why) is it [that] Satan has [thus] filled thine heart?"—the words of the Peshitto which Barhebraeus omitted I have put in brackets. Duval's principle falls to the ground along with his non-recognition of a familiar passage (though Barhebraeus had said "Ananias" too!), and his mistake of ܡܢܐ for ܡܢܐ; and with it also Professor Wilson's extension of Duval's "apposition" into an adjective use. There is scarcely space to show it here; but the other example I above referred to (which attempts to prove that ܡܢܐ is used of persons), from the Chrestomathy of Knös, cited by Wilson from Duval, is likewise a misquotation and a mistake. Instead of ... ܡܢܐ it is ... ܡܢܐ, and the context shows abundantly that the meaning is not "*who are these kings?*" but "*of what are these kings?*"

"The plates for the first sixty pages," the preface informs us, "were made by Messrs. Tuttle, *Moorhouse* [read *Morehouse*] and Taylor, of New Haven, Conn.; those for the remainder by the firm of W. Drugulin, of Leipzig, Germany." The style of typography is creditable to both; but there are the inevitable misprints in the work of both; many more in the Syriac than there ought to be; more in the English than are pleasant, and some of these latter before we reach p. 60. On p. 36, first line of paragraph 1, "words" for "verbs" is quite unfortunate; on p. 20, in (3), "fountain" for "fourteen" does not so much harm. But the numerous mistakes in numbers made in referring to the author's Manual are a serious inconvenience.

The critic finds much that he would like to say—without fault-finding—about the representations of facts where theories differ; but space will hardly permit; also about a few matters which all the grammars state as invariable

truths, but which have notable exceptions; but of these we will mention but one. Referring to p. 45, Rem. 2, it is not an invariable rule that in the Eттаf'al stem, wherever the preformative is a *tau*, the other *taus* are written as one, to avoid the occurrence of three *taus*. The manuscripts often have three *taus* in such case; many of the Heracleian Gospels and kindred writings have them regularly.

The grammar has the praiseworthy feature of a good index.

Concerning the Manual by itself, there is little need of remark. The progressive method is good; the selections are intended in the main to correspond with those in Prof. Harper's *Hebrew Manual*, and are rather limited in range. "The last selection," says the preface, "is the introductory portion of the history of Rabban Soma [better Sauma], possessed in manuscript by the author and never before published. Being printed in the Nestorian alphabet, it will be useful as an introduction to the East Syriac system of writing." But the matter had been already printed, along with rest of the manuscript—except some scandalous mutilations; edited anonymously by one of the Urmî Lazarists, printed by Drugulin at Leipzig, and published by Maisonneuve at Paris, in 1888. Moreover, Prof. Wilson's Manual does not give it "in the Nestorian alphabet," but in the Estranghela, with Nestorian pointing.

The Manual has a double system of numbering the notes, which probably aim at utility in the class-room.

While in the statement of a number of elementary and of some minor matters we should not agree with Prof. Wilson, it would be improper and unjust not to recognize the labor and fidelity with which the bulk of the work is done; the books, together, will prove a most useful pair. But both Grammar and Manual are so full of matter that an *autodidakt* beginner would be overloaded. The best use must be in the class-room, with a judicious teacher.

ISAAC H. HALL.

BEZOLD'S KOUYUNJIK CATALOGUE.*

The second volume of Bezold's Catalogue appeared on November 26th. It contains Nos. KK. 2192–8162. This volume differs in several respects from vol. I. An attempt has been made to save as much space as possible, and hence the description of the various tablets is less complete. Only the size—in inches—is given and the number of lines. A convenient list of signs has been introduced, and these also play their part in diminishing the space necessary to the description. For example: "12 + 11 lines" = 12 lines on obverse and 11 on reverse; "10 + 11 . . . lines" = 10 lines on obverse, the reverse lost; "5 ± 7 lines" = 5 lines on obverse and 7 on reverse, but the minus sign has been added to indicate the possibility of the 7 lines being on the obverse and 5 on the reverse, etc., etc. It is not necessary in a catalogue to indicate the color of a tablet, whether baked or unbaked, number of cracks, erasures, etc., and hence I am inclined to think that the author has done well to omit these details. These can be added to the description when the text is published in full with notes.

* Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum, by C. Bezold. Volume II. Published by order of the Trustees, pp. ix. xxiv. and 421–900. London: 1891. Price, 15 shillings.